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FUJAIRAH, United Arab Emirates – Inshore Boat Unit 25 (IBU-25), a mobilized Navy Reserve unit based in Annapolis, Md., maintains a constant vigil against terrorism.

The command, comprised of more than 70 Sailors, patrols the waters in 27-foot patrol craft to prevent attacks from small boats, sub-surface threats and swimmers, and provides seaward force protection to high-value assets, according to LCDR Charles J. Shivery, the unit's commanding officer.

Crews attached to IBU-25 often perform 12-hour watches out at sea and inside of the Port of Fujairah, guarding U.S. Navy ships, Military Sealift Command supply ships, U.S.-flagged cargo ships and coalition warships as they enter and exit this strategic Middle Eastern port.

Mobilized Jan. 20 of this year SBU-25 and took over the operational

currently deployed.

"We have a job to do here, and most of us are seasoned personnel," said senior enlisted advisor ENC(SW) David Wheeler from Baltimore, Md. "In the Naval Reserve, you have to be ready for any kind of mission and expect change, no matter what kind of unit you're attached to."

IBU-25 has three boat detachments, each with five crews, a patrol leader and watch officer. The watch officer operates much like the officer of the deck on a ship and is the direct representative of the commanding officer on the water.

"Every patrol has a patrol leader, and he gives directions to each of the coxswains in terms of tactical placement of the boats based on the threat axis," said watch officer BMC Drew Thomas from Glen Burnie, Md. "I sometimes board the vessel at sea as they come into port, as the command and control officer. I come aboard and welcome the ship's captain to Fujairah, and find out his intentions for the port visit. Then I jot down any logistics questions the captain may have, and inform him

Navy Reserve security forces defend Middle East port

about the liberty and security policies here."

Each boat operates with a minimum three-person crew: one coxswain and two gunners, with one of the gunners also acting as an engineer. The coxswain is overall in charge of the craft and the safety of the crew.

"I like being a boat captain. It's what I have always wanted to do in the Navy," said BM2 Timothy J. Shepke Jr. from Pasadena, Md. "Sometimes, we really take a beating out here when the seas are high. It takes a lot of commitment to be out here and stay focused on your job. For the most part, there's not a whole lot to worry about, but not paying

attention for only a split second or two could mean the difference between life and death."

One of the biggest challenges for the crew is keeping all six of its boats operational.

"The knowledge levels of the Sailors here is really high," said maintenance chief, ENC Michael Hontz from New Tripoli, Pa. "We rely on the supply personnel a lot to find some of the parts that are not readily available to us."

The command uses 27-foot patrol boats and two 32-foot Kingston patrol boats outfitted with Mark 19 50 cal., and M-60 machine gun mounts.

"Running operations all the time at sea is not kind to the boats," said IBU-25 support officer LCDR James McCartney from Washington, D.C. "Our staff is amazing with the maintenance and repair of the boats and making it all work. The people here make it all so much easier."

Since its four-month stay in Fujairah, IBU-25 has completed more than 120 successful missions protecting U.S. and coalition assets. ♦



Photo by JO2 Jason Trevett

Crew members assigned to Inshore Boat Unit 25 (IBU-25) patrol the waters off of Fujairah UAE. The crew is assigned to Inshore Boat Unit 25 (IBU-25), home ported in Annapolis, Md. The unit mobilized with more than 70 Navy Reservists to provide anti-terrorism and force protection to Military Sealift Command ships and coalition warships operating in the region.

mission as U.S. Naval Security Force Fujairah from Naval Security Force Bahrain Feb. 13.

"We are the largest naval presence in Fujairah, and we are in a unique position here," said LT Robert C. Millington from Bristow, Va., IBU-25's executive officer.

The port of Fujairah, with its large bunkering capacity and strategic location along the southern approaches to the Strait of Hormuz, is a vital transit point for ships. What makes the IBU-25 mission in Fujairah unique, according to Shivery, is that it is a commissioned reserve unit and the only reserve element of Naval Coastal Warfare Group Two



Photo by PH2 Eric Powell

U.S. Navy Seabee, Tactical Movement Team (TMT) member, BUCN Christopher Roberts, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74 (NMCB-74), keeps a watchful eye on traffic around one of construction project sites in Central Iraq.

Seabees work as an integrated team

JOC Siegfried Bruner

First Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group Public Affairs

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – Navy Seabees have deployed in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Currently, more than 450 Reserve Seabees are mobilized for these operations – about 40 percent of the Seabees deployed in this area of operations. Naval Construction Forces rely heavily upon Reserve personnel because they are a force multiplier; they support the operational tempo for their active-duty counterparts, bringing additional traits and experience to the deployed environment.

In the Al Anbar province of Iraq, major elements of two battalions, one active duty and one Reserve, work in conjunction with a command element, the First Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group (I MEG). Both of these battalions, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74 (NMCB-74) and NMCB-14, operate in different areas but the scope and type of work they perform are similar. "The only difference in the nature of the work performed by these two battalions is dictated by the location of their work sites and specific project requirements," said CAPT Mark Kistner, I MEG chief of staff.

CDR Lewis Hurst, I MEG operations officer, said Reservists are doing the exact same jobs as their active-duty counterparts.

"If I have work to be done, it is going to the unit at that location, no questions," Hurst said. "As the operations officer, I can't afford to treat anyone different – it's all about mission accomplishment, and they get the same great jobs the active [duty] personnel get."

There are some differences between the active-duty and Reserve personnel, though, Kistner and Hurst agree. Procedural issues, such as which forms to fill out and what instructions to refer to, tend to be a little more elusive for Reservists. However, Reservists also tend to have more experience in a trade because of their related civilian work experience. "Individuals can be more capable.

Many are journeymen in their trades; they've been doing this [kind of work] for 10 to 20 years. They are older, and there's a maturity factor," said Kistner.

Reservists also possess skills that might be unrelated to their rating or military function, Hurst added. "One of the first things I do when I know that we are getting assigned Reservists is to ask for a listing of their civilian occupations. You can't imagine how often (Seabees) get asked to do special projects that require skills that we don't even have in our battalions. They come to the Seabees because we are a 'Can Do!' organization and they understand that we are going to find a way to

current operations creates an opportunity to include Reservists. "If you're going to have a Reserve element to rely on, you have to use them," Kistner said. "If you only use them for the worst-case scenario, are you truly preparing them? Are you missing out on using an effective resource?"

In fact, at I MEG, Reservists are integral to the command element here, performing in various positions and at various levels. "I would say you would be hard pressed to come into our organization and determine who is a Reservist or active (duty)," Hurst said. "From our command master chief and our communications officer to our petty officer of

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make it happen. I often utilize the reservists to make that 'Seabee Magic,' whether it is finding someone who knows how to evaluate a specialized piece of equipment or develop a computer program. It's likely that someone will have the knowledge," he said.

One downside to mobilizing large numbers of Reservists for an operation, Hurst explained, is the need to allow adequate time for Reservists to prepare their families and employers for the change, and to prepare for a fast-paced operational environment. Additionally, necessary training for an operation is included in the mobilization.

"We also have specific training for the Tactics/Techniques and Procedures (TTPs) specific to the area [to which] they are deploying. We generally do this and all the other mobilization requirements over a one to two month period," said Hurst.

Seabees are ideally organized and employed to incorporate Reservists. Kistner explained the ground-campaign nature of

the watch, all Reservists."

Seabees are currently involved in OIF in a variety of ways in support of the I MEF. They provide force protection construction and civil-military operations, which include the clearing of rubble and rebuilding of infrastructure. The MEG's officer in charge of construction has managed and/or awarded more than \$100 million in contracts for rebuilding and improving water treatment plants, city infrastructure, roads and various other structures (soccer stadiums, schools, hospitals, etc.) to improve stability and quality of life for the Iraqi people. These contracts, in turn, provide employment for hundreds of Iraqis.

Seabees are also providing training to young Iraqis, through an innovative program called Iraqi Construction Apprentice Program (ICAP), which teaches them construction skills that they can bring back to their communities to foster self-sufficiency and a more prosperous future. ♦